

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 07PORTAUPRINCE966, UNREST CONTINUES IN GONAIVES

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g.

#07PORTAUPRINCE966.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07PORTAUPRINCE966	2007-05-30 17:42	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Port Au Prince

Appears in these articles:
[www.haitiliberte.com](#)

VZCZCXRO0349
PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #0966 1501742
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 301742Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6190
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1544
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1363
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0810
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1221

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 000966

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2012
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: UNREST CONTINUES IN GONAIVES

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (c).

¶1. (C) Summary. Violent demonstrations against the government and MINUSTAH on May 22 and 24 are the most recent result of increased gang activity and tensions in the northern port city of Gonaives. The murder of a local journalist and civic activist Alix Joseph sparked the most recent disturbances. Local gang members infiltrated demonstrations organized by journalists' organizations and threw stones at MINUSTAH and the Haitian police on May 22 and repeated their actions on May 24 during Joseph's funeral, according to MINUSTAH sources. Political observers believe that Senator Youri Latortue is either instigating or encouraging the disturbances. Ongoing violence in Gonaives discredits both the government and MINUSTAH, raising Latortue's profile as a powerful alternative to the current order. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Armed men on May 16 assassinated Alix Joseph, the director of programming of the private Radio-Tele Provinciale in Gonaives, shooting him nine times while he sat in his car. The Haitian National Police (HNP) have yet to determine a motive for the homicide, though many of his friends and colleagues claim he had run afoul of the local gangs because of work as a journalist and as an anti-gang community activist. Joseph's death followed the April 13 murder of former journalist and regional spokesman for Lavalas Johnson Edouard, which also remains unsolved.

¶3. (C) Several local journalists' organizations organized demonstrations in Gonaives on May 22 to protest Joseph's murder, the rising level of criminal activity in Gonaives, and lack of law-enforcement response. MINUSTAH officials who witnessed the demonstration reported that roughly two hundred men, most of them young and apparently poor and many of them presumed gang members, joined the protest, throwing rocks at UNPol and Haitian Police (HNP) officers, and marched to the town prison in an attempt to release the inmates before UNPol units disbursed the crowd with tear gas. Rock-throwing demonstrators on May 24 also disrupted Joseph's funeral in Gonaives, again requiring UNPol and HNP intervention with tear gas.

¶4. (C) Comment. The disturbances in Gonaives appear to be the latest episode in a clash between government authority in Port-au-Prince, and by extension MINUSTAH, and criminal forces in Gonaives who control the port, the local commerce, and the local law enforcement. While Youri Latortue may have become something of a combination boogeyman and pat answer for government officials seeking to explain their failure to improve conditions in Gonaives, a broad spectrum of contacts with knowledge of the situation almost unanimously believe that Latortue orchestrates an anti-government/anti-MINUSTAH campaign and manipulates the local gangs to his own political ends. Specifically, they charge that Latortue encourages lawlessness in Gonaives to discredit the government and to bolster his case for the re-establishment of Haiti's army, while strengthening his own power base in the region.

¶5. (c) Comment continued. MINUSTAH officials relate that the Argentinian contingent stationed in Gonaives once kept a tight lid on street disturbances and blatant criminal activity, particularly in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Jean in 2004. After a series of troop rotations, however, they have become lax and disengaged from the situation in the city. Several MINUSTAH officials have expressed that MINUSTAH and the HNP now need to do for Gonaives what they did in Cite Soleil -- target gang leaders and impose order in the slums. The MINUSTAH and the HNP struck the first blow on May 27, arresting Gonaives gang-leader (and presumed Latortue associate) Willifort Ferdinand, alias "Ti Will," as he gave an interview on a local radio station.
SANDERSON